

PEOPLE’S ROLE IN PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE LEVERAGED BY SIAD IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF NEW CORELLA, DAVAO PROVINCE, MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

Joycylin Ayuste-Bastian

Abstract

Governance and public administration is conventionally tasked to elected political leaders and bureaucrats in the Philippines. Until recently, good governance in a decentralized polity subsumed empowering citizens to participate in local political decision-making. This paper is first to conduct empirical analysis on the role of *barangay* people in promoting transparency in the municipality of New Corella, Davao del Norte, Mindanao, Philippines. The study found that the indigenous-informal community support systems, entrepreneurship, capacity-building by NGOs, participatory leadership, and the local government code of 1991 influenced how people played their roles. Transparency is highly manifested among *barangays* where leaders are deliberately promoting people’s involvement in governance, which is heavily affected by value system, social capital, participatory strategy, and vision of leaders.

Keywords: Governance, Local Government Code of 1991, Local Government Unit, Minimum Basic Needs, New Corella, participatory, Sustainable Integrated Area Development (SIAD), transparency

Abbreviations: BC-*Barangay* Captain, BHW-*Barangay* Health Worker, CBDP-Comprehensive *Barangay* Development Plan, EB/MDC-Expanded *Barangay*/Municipal Development Council, IPHC-DMSF-Institute of Primary Health Care-Davao Medical School Foundation, FGD-Focus Group Discussion, IP-Indigenous People, LCO-Local Community Organizer, LGU-Local Government Unit, LGC-Local Government Code, MBN-Minimum Basic Needs, NC-New Corella, NGO-Non-Government Organization, PO-People’s Organization, SAPIME-Situational Analysis, Planning, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation, SIAD-Sustainable Integrated Area Development, SCO-Senior Community Organizer.

Introduction

New Corella, a Hall of Famer in the Galing Pook Awards, is reclassified from a fourth to third-class municipality in the province of Davao del Norte in Mindanao. Sixty eight percent (68%) of

32,146 hectares land area is devoted to agriculture. The local economy relies mainly on agriculture of which 69% of the 8,224 households depend on mono-crop production. It has a population of 44,590, 20 *barangays*, average annual income of 4.0 and 6.0 million pesos in 2001 and 2002, respectively. The poverty incidence in 1999 was 65% of which in 2002 dropped to 54.6% (Municipal Profile 2002). NC had been a recipient of health and livelihood projects of a local NGO (IPHC-DMSF) since 1986, wherein projects, groups and people's engagement were on and off. The current mayor who had not been happy with this phenomenon aspired for a sustained good government leveraged by SIAD strategy that covers community organizing, budgeting and planning, political education, and capability building. It was introduced by IPHC-DMSF and financially supported by the Asian Health Institute, Japan. People's participation as its gist is fitting and timing to the LGC of 1991. Orientations were ridden to their activities in order this new initiative is well understood by all in NC. Awareness takes time and best integrated into a comprehensive range of prevention and intervention strategies that reinforce their messages (Free to Grow, 2006).

A *barangay* is the basic community unit in the Philippines created out of contiguous territory (LGC, 1991). An elected *barangay* captain heads a *barangay* (Library of Congress Country Studies, 2003). It is further divided into small units called *purok*, headed by an appointed leader, with 15 to 30 households. A municipality is made up of several *barangays* treated as one LGU. The LGUs are compelled by the code to involve the *barangay* people in political process that was traditionally a leader-function. The code is a legal instrument for transparency, accountability, participation and good governance of which citizens' participation is a key element. Thus, elected officials or civil servants need to set example of high standards of professional and personal integrity. The accountability of local authorities to their citizens is a fundamental tenet of governance (Kaban Galing, 2001).

Governance and government are being confused as one. Actually, governance is distinct from government and refers to the relationship between the civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the state and society, the government and the governed (Halfani et al. 1994). Governance is not government (Lake 1999:33). It is the establishment and operation of social institutions (in the sense of rules of the game that serve to define social practices, assign roles, and guide interactions among the occupants of these roles) capable of resolving conflicts, facilitating cooperation, or, more generally, alleviating collective-action problems in a world of interdependent actors (Young 1994:15). Governance is order plus intentionality (Rosenau 1992:5). It can be good or bad. Good governance is meant here as public management characterized by the rule of law, justice, transparency and accountability (Nsubuga 2004:177).

Participation is the inclusion of human resources in development efforts to have a stronger chance of success, and tackling the structural causes of people's poverty. Participation is a process whereby people seek to have some influence and to gain access to the resources, which would help them sustain and improve their living standards (Oakley 1995:1). Popular participation is an essential ingredient of good governance and a prerequisite for the kind of development that takes care of the felt needs, problems, aspirations, and priorities of the people (Sharma 2004:178). Once participatory principle is

institutionalized as people's way of life it remains there as long as necessary (Bastian, 2004:93).

Transparency in simple terms means see through, clearness or vividness. In the premise of good governance transparency is a state or condition that allows open communication, scrutiny, inquiry and expression of opinions free from filtering of information either from above or below. The degree of transparency is a critical gauge of good governance that requires enormous people's involvement and political will.

Thus, this study ascertained what roles people played and how in promoting transparency, and to analyze the hindering and facilitating factors. Insights could enlighten the LGUs that mobilizing people in political initiatives is complicated, but would eventually ease their responsibilities. Indeed, this would inspire people to exercise their roles in upholding transparency to their own advantage.

Materials and Methods

Process Documentation Research (PDR) is a scientific research tool dealing with qualitative data analysis. PDR was originated by the Institute of Philippine Culture to support a program learning process intervention in the Philippine National Irrigation Authority (de los Reyes 1989:21). It is a tool to help development organizations learn from their own experience (Korten 1989:13).

PDR was used in this study through actual field observation, intuition, talking to a wide array of informants to circumvent filtering of information, note taking, data collection, and deepening analysis using why questions with special focus on the process itself. The informants analyzed the situation studied together with the trained research team. PDR, a humble and seemingly intuitive idea, is in fact a revolutionary tool challenging the priests and precepts of conventional social science, and authoritarian organization (Korten 1989:17). PDR was conducted nine times (March, August and December) from 2002 to 2005 at least three weeks each time and surveys thrice with two trained research assistants and 11 LCOs as field-based researchers. The research team conducted 135 FGDs, house-to-house interviews in 140 households and consultations at the municipal, *barangay* and *purok* levels, integrated in monthly meetings or training.

Primary data were collected through FGDs, interviews, consultations, field observation, and open-ended questionnaire survey. These were narratives about community support systems, social and political dynamics, transparency promotion strategies, selecting leaders, people's participation, and factors affecting the process. The secondary data were profile, minutes of meeting, People's Congress Video (like assembly), logbook, municipal and *barangay* development plans, annual investment plans, MBN, project reports, annual assessment, and success indicators (resource accessing, organizing, infrastructure, environment, public safety, education, and health). These formed the background of NC and addressed the research question.

The informants, as referred by De Poy and Gitlin (1994), at the municipal, *barangay* and NGO levels provided the data. The municipal and NGO informants were selected using purposive or deliberate random sampling, particularly those who were directly involved in the transparency initiative. They are the mayor, municipal administrator, municipal planning and development officer (MPDO) and four

staff, budget officer, human resource and development officer, municipal health officer, department of interior and local government officer, teacher, six municipal councilors, Catholic Priest, 11 LCOs, SIAD pointperson, and SCO. At the *barangay* level, respondents were categorized into two: 1) *barangay* officials and volunteers, and 2) local residents. Purposive or deliberate random sampling was applied to category one, 10/20=50% BCs, 30/140=21% councilors, 20/20=100% volunteers; while cluster sampling for category two, 140/19,203=0.73% registered voters.

Transparency creates participation that implies communication, openness, and accountability of public officials. People's role to promote it in governance was measured in four parameters such as (1) access and use of information, (2) decision-making and planning processes, (3) empowerment, citizen participation and civic engagement, and (4) allocation of resources. Each was used in terms of 0 or 1 measure. This means (1) have access or no access, (2) involved or not involved, (3) participate or not participate, (4) need-based or arbitrary. These indicators resonated the works of Robert Chambers (1991), John Field (2003), Hamidul Huq (2001), and the National Anti-Poverty Commission of the Philippines (*Kaban Galing* 2001).

Results and Discussion

1. Table 1: People's Role in Promoting Transparency (PRPT)

Parameters	Measures	People's Role	Facilitated	Hindered
Access and use of information	Have access (1) No access (0)	Researcher, informer, analyzer, user	Available profiles, CMDP and CBDP, " <i>Taho saBarangay</i> ", MBN	Bureaucracy
Making plans and decisions	Involved (1) Not involved (0)	Lobbyer, planner, decision-maker	People's Congress, " <i>Taho saBarangay</i> ", Expansion of MDC/ BDCs	Political dynamics, social dynamics
Empowerment, participation, civic engagement	Participated (1) Not participate (0)	Advocator, Organizer, Entrepreneur, Voter	LGC Of 1991, SIAD strategy, training and capability-building, political education, social dynamics, indigenous community support systems, IGP	Vision of elected leaders, attitude, economic
Allocation of resources	Need based (1) Arbitrary (0)	Mobilizer	MBN, AIP	Conflicting interests, values, leader

Table 1 showed the four parameters of transparency that are measured in terms of 0 to 1 scale. As presented in **bold text and scale (1)**, the findings pointed that the people a.) had access to information like the CMDP, CBDP, and AIP, b.) involved in making decisions and planning, c.) participated in the empowerment processes and other civic activities, and d.) resources allocated were based on needs. These were not possible in the past at all levels because of too much bureaucracy.

2. People's Role in Transparency Promotion

2.1 People as Researchers

The IPHC SCO interviewed said that the people became local researchers who analyzed and used information collected by the local enumerators through the MBN tool. MBN has 33 indicators

categorized as survival needs, security needs, and participation needs (MBN Primer, 1995:4,5). MBN (or BMN as originated by the United Nations in 1970's) replaced the *Barangay* Data Board (BDB) used by NC before. BDB is a system of continuous data gathering and display and a tool for identifying and prioritizing community problems, for effective and efficient planning, monitoring and evaluating programs (Mirafuentes, 1994). The MBN data was used by the *purok* people in problem analysis and prioritization of top 10 needs.

2.2 People as Planners

Barangay informants said in the consultations that the people became planners, lobbyists, decision makers, and co-managers of the LGU. It started in 1999 when a participatory planning approach replaced the past top-down planning which was done by 5 to 10 professionals at the municipality. By then the planning members were 52. Previous planners used data forecast making infrastructure-based plan quicker to package while recent system required community researchers to survey all *barangays*. They prioritized top 10 needs per *purok* led by the *purok* leader. During interviews, families showed high degree of importance to the MBN databoard as a planning tool. They pointed what Gill said, “wrong data is worse than no data” (Gill 1993a).

All *barangays* adopted participatory planning but four were less enthusiastic due to economic and conflicting political interests. *Purok* informants said that they are now more visible and dynamic to follow-through the top 10 needs they endorsed to the EBDC for action. They felt empowered as they gained sense of pride to take hold of the resources. BCs stated that plan approval was smoother and the people eagerly got them implemented. If all people see what they are doing as part of a practical process leading to analysis of priorities, planning and action, they are more likely to strive to get it right (Chambers, 199:161).

2.3 People as Decision-Makers

Decision-making is a critical planning function eminently done by authorities at the municipal level. Informants told us the case of an LGU-funded water project in *barangay* Carcor. The BC knew it by chance. Right away he bargained with the LGU to supervise it but was not granted for technical reason. Thereafter, his active participation to all municipal activities ceased. Two more cases were the construction of basketball court and *purok* waiting shed instead of potable water which ranked 2nd need affecting 2,784 of 8,224 (33.85%) households (MBN data 2002). Two BCs also stated that, one day some labor masons surprisingly came to their area. They asked: “Why are you here”? The masons replied: “We are only doing our job”. It indicates symptomatic decision-making or lack of coordination. Cases showed that less transparent informal mechanisms of influence are predominant (Sokoloff, 2006).

Progress in making decisions was noted during field observation. The expansion of municipal and *barangay* committees or creation of special bodies in 2000 gave space for participation. To cite, *purok* leaders and residents meet monthly to discuss concerns like irrigation, top 10 needs and so on. Then decisions are legalized through *barangay* council resolution or ordinances. The level of awareness

moves upward, the ability to understand others' perspectives, to facilitate and build consensus, and to move issues into action (Free to Grow, 2006).

Past decision-making reinforced top-down planning that Chambers fittingly described. Central planners, cut off from local conditions, confined with their computers, uncritical of bad data and ignorant of how people live, are prone to construct for themselves and their colleagues costly worlds of fantasy, prophesying doom and prescribing massive programs which are neither needed nor feasible (Chambers, 2001:161). Decisions made by the apex may be misguided. The people should be consulted about their needs, counterpart, and skills to optimize resources.

2.4 People as Organizers

Field observation and interviews revealed that people organized groups, advocate and mobilize collective action. One case is the dismissed banana plantation in *barangay* Sta. Cruz since they knew its adverse effects to health, social structure, and environment. There are of course safe practices nowadays. The BC of Sta. Cruz and his people capitalized the law that the *barangay* captain shall enforce laws and regulations relating to pollution control and protection of the environment (LGC 1991: 120). People's health is valued more in *barangays* where BHWs are active in advocacy.

2.5 People as Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial role emerged in 1999 to rescue 65% of the 8,224 households living in poverty. It was reduced to 54.69% in 2002 (MBN 2002). The average family income was below Php 3,000 (\$59) per month. And unemployment placed sixth top problem affecting 45% of the households (Cayon, 2005).

The FGD informants said that the causes of poverty were seasonal income, poor farming technique, lacking capital, absence of marketing support, poor infrastructure, bureaucracy and individualism. The workforce accounts 69% farmers and 31% entrepreneurs or employees (Socio-economic Profile, 2001). Mono cropping is popular using expensive synthetic inputs loaned from local traders. After harvest they had to sell their lowly priced produce to these traders to keep their credit line. As they operate individually collaborative efforts to bargain seems elusive. Dodge pointed, collaborative approach involves reaching opponents with openness and a sincere wish to work together to achieve coalition goals, and also being willing to take a critical position if things are not moving forward. No single issue in itself will always have the power to unite. Power over the long run comes from the fact that the issue at hand is framed within this larger set of issues, creating a much more powerful message to policy makers and politicians (Dodge et. al, 2003).

The LGU addressed poverty by introducing sustainable agriculture, new lending scheme, and marketing system. The mayor tilled a model farm using organic seeds and fertilizers he produced. The new lending scheme required cooperation among farmers and traders. The traders manage and get profit share while the farmers lend some money with 2% interest monthly as against 20% from loan sharks. They formed a monitoring committee (MC) to track price trends and release market advisory. In low price seasons, they keep their produce in a user-fee depot they managed. They lobbied funds for this

depot to the LGU. The traders, farmers and LGU organized the ‘Market Day’ to stir-up buy and sell of farm products. The ‘Market Day’ as a new innovation was frowned by farmers who liked to sell individually.

In 2003, 50 farmers in *barangay* Sambog were trained by IPHC-DMSF on sustainable agriculture (Sus-Ag) and formed *Barangay* Sambog Farmers Association on Sustainable Agriculture. Diversified farming turns in extra income and makes them less anxious on the effects of calamities on their crops (Cayon, 2005). Farmers in *barangays* Mambing and Patrocenio replicated diversified farming as they viewed it environment-friendly and sustainable. Their president convinced doubtful farmers by stressing that soil damage is caused by old farming system. Regaining its fertility needs much money but would later compensate since Sustainable Agriculture requires less farm inputs. His idea was coherent to one economic theory stating that, “incremental revenue must exceed, or at least equal the corresponding incremental cost” (Poblador, 1996).

The former dysfunctional economy, uncoordinated trading activities, low farming know-how, and lack of cooperation, turned a productive experience of participatory approaches. It resulted in empowerment, formation of groups, collective action and better income. Poverty incidence fell from 65% in 1999 to 54.69% in 2002 (MBN Data, 2002). It was due to the intensification of livelihood program, introduction of micro-financing scheme, propagation and promotion of organic farming inputs, systematization of marketing support initiated by the LGU, better farming know-how, and focused-targeting through MBN data. The profit share of the LGU helped raise its average annual income from Php. 4M in 1999 to 7M in 2004 (Cayon, 2005).

NC departed from a stereotyped notion that large state bureaucracies are inherently defective and wasteful, and the market is better equipped than the state to provide most goods and services (Elcock & Minogue et.al, 2001). They surpassed bureaucratic constraints by consolidating existing market and mutual reinforcement. People’s participation in local economy contributed to transparency. The World Bank (1997) claimed that there is a positive correlation between ‘good governance’ and levels of successful economic performance (Elcock & Minogue, 2001:100).

2.6 People as Voters

People elect leaders based on recommendation, popularity, vote buying, and qualification. Parents recommend their choice, elites capitalized on popularity, rich buy votes (not all), and the educated or competent take advantage of qualification. The last two resembled South America and the Caribbean wherein wealth and literacy were serious binding constraints (Sokoloff, 2006). In NC, wealthy candidates who buy votes are likely to get elected as a returned favor.

The turnout of the 2004 national and local elections was 80.3% or 15,425 of the 19,203 (Municipal Profile & Water Resource Data, 2005). Interviews with the NGO staff, LCOs, people, BCs, and mayor indicated that voting based on qualification had overtaken vote buying which was attributed to the massive political education called “meeting-de-avance”, first time ever organized by IPHC-DMSF and the mayor. On average, 65% (12,481.95) of the voters attended “meeting-de-avance”, of which *barangay*

Mambing hit the highest 70% (105/150) (*Barangay Logbook*, 2004). The BC of Mambing said that people come to the meeting for free food in the past while now they come to learn some criteria to choose candidates. It was validated through an FGD by asking the voters to describe a good leader. They said that a good leader must be honest, committed, and knowledgeable yet consultative public manager. "If again we fail to elect our leaders, we again suffer from bad services." Errors in development lie on a continuum between two poles, at one pole embraced errors which lead to learning; at the other, embedded errors which sustain mistakes (Chambers 1999:15).

One BC said that people's behavior in voting was influenced by decades of training, political education, participatory leadership, and perennial bad services. How votes are cast, who can cast them, and how the candidates on the ballots are selected, can have a fundamental impact on the policy choices that the elected representatives make, who in some sense constitute the collective government of the electors (Sokoloff, 2006). Interviews with the LCOs and 10 voters indicated awareness that "vote buying" is bribery, a sign of dishonesty. "How can we trust them when they are in power? We learned our lessons." People now vote for whom they have faith in. This correlates with a Confucian analects which is a favorite maxim of Japan's former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, "If the people have no faith in their leaders, they cannot stand." Enhancing citizenship and advocacy skills provides opportunities for individuals to better understand how local state and federal government works, how laws are drafted, and budgets constructed-in order to make democracy work on behalf of a community's needs and issues (Free to Grow, 2006).

By recommendation and vote buying practices in the past were based on allies, patronage, and value system. The traditional Filipino values of *hiya* or shame and *utang na loob* or debt of gratitude may be fading but their power to silence people remained strong (Bastian, 1994:85). *Utang na loob* or recognizing indebtedness to the one who gave favors implies reciprocal personal alliances that had obvious implications for the society in general and the political system in particular. Favors long past are never forgotten, always remembered to be reciprocated with similar or greater kindness (<http://www.philippineshop.com>, 2006). However, observers believed that as Philippine society became more modernized and urban in orientation, *utang na loob* become less and less important in the political and social systems. Educated Filipinos were less likely to feel obligated to extend help, thereby not initiating *utang na loob* relationship (Library of Congress Country Studies, 1991).

Rural NC became modern in the process of implementing donor-funded projects for 20 years including training that honed people's know-how, skills and character. Community awareness strategies are intended to bring attention to the impact of high-risk behaviors of individuals and the community at large, and in doing so, set the stage for behavioral change (Free to Grow, 2006). A BC from New Corella was interviewed in Japan during her attendance to a training said that people are now kin on experience, education and moral qualifications of candidates indicating higher awareness. Clarity of standards and strong conviction were important political variables. When standards were clear, and a profession felt confident that they were right or the best available, conscientious men could look to them for guidance and take on from them the energy that flowed from unclouded conviction (Altshuler, 1954).

The Context of Participation in New Corella

People's participation in NC is gaining grounds but dilemma lies on the time-consuming nature of participatory processes (Quinanahan, 2004). Same as the communal tea plantation in Japan, the tea planters used much time to work together. There were delays in the beginning but it became speedy once people started to participate, as theorized by a Japanese political scientist.

Participation is shown in many ways to serve certain interest. For example, 16 *barangays* were actively involved in addressing their needs. It fits Podemski's theory of 'positive participation', which means participation for something. Carcor was formerly active (especially the BC) but cooled off since the BC and the mayor disagreed on a water project. His people sympathized by becoming inactive to municipal-initiated activities. Podemski described this as 'negative participation', which means participation against someone. The BC of Macgum focused on the banana plantation (which was rejected by Sta. Cruz) to boost his own economic power while the council members of San Jose worked independently to easily fund their preferred projects. People in these *barangays* were either passive or too reliant on their leaders. In general, people's participation is more visible in *barangays* with BCs who are flexible to changes. The responses of the 20 *barangays* (as well as the people in each *barangay*) were influenced by economic, behavioral and leadership factors. Leadership is social (located in human communities); it is embodied and concrete (affected by material aspects and physical constraints); it is located (context dependent); it is engaged (dependent on interaction with the surrounding environment); and it is specific (sensitive to contingencies) (Ospiña et. al, 2000).

Leaders valued the reciprocity of people's participation. The mayor who is in his last term (third term) said that consultations must be sustainable, and ensuring that proper implementation done, should become a people's accepted behavior and expected participation in governance. By developing this culture of people's participation, they will be the ones to ensure that good governance should be in place always (Cayon 2005). Transparency is basic to make participatory good governance work by which the rich, elite and poor people should strive together. Analyses indicated that rich/elites are too busy with business while poor families participate in meetings as they see it a chance to lobby their demands. Viitanen (1994) pointed that participation of the poor is inadequate without involving the powerful. Both elites and poor should have access to situation-relevant information in the shared environment of the participants as it provides a means for better exchange, coordination, and negotiated order in a community (Sawhney et. al.,2000).

The current administration of NC demonstrated transparency by publishing statistical and financial information accessible to the public (Bastian 2004:94). Decentralization for local governance is expected to facilitate democracy and democratic politics at the local level (Wanyande 2004:10,11). It creates reactions like indifference or warm reception similar in New Corella depending on how one is affected. Local good governance could affect change, empower individuals and peoples, promote transparency of LGU operation, eradicate political dynasty, uphold bottom-up planning, facilitate the implementation of need-based programs and practice multi-sectoral convergence (Bastian 2004:93).

Facilitating Factors

Six factors that encouraged people to promote transparency are the LGC of 1991, SIAD, MBN tool, database, social support systems and mechanisms for transparency.

The LGC of 1991 stated that there shall be a *barangay* assembly composed of all actual residents for at least six months, 15 years old or over, and citizens of the Philippines duly registered in the list of *barangay* assembly members. The *barangay* assembly shall meet at least twice a year to hear and discuss semestral report of the SBs concerning its activities and finances as well as problems affecting the *barangay* (LGC, 1991:126). The code compelled the LGU to engage the people.

Despite its time-consuming nature, SIAD within the SAPIME framework and its capability-building component inspired participatory processes. A female BC said that the *barangay* leaders learned to hold assemblies and the people were becoming punctual and more aware after series of training. In the past the voters frequently replied “I don’t know” when asked “Why do you vote?” Baustista (1999) got the same reply while conducting a research, which was interpreted as a manifestation of passivity or lack of interest. Political education had helped voters know their rights and responsibilities. The mayor had also said that the people could now shoot sharp discussion, argue, negotiate, oppose and take risks. They remember clearly what was approved in the previous meetings. Typical examples are *barangay* Sta. Cruz for rejecting the banana plantation for public health, and *barangay* Macgum for accepting it to benefit from infrastructures and economic boosts. These are signs of empowerment.

The MBN tool was instrumental to the establishment of database such as profile, development and investment plans, and data boards. *Purok* level discussion-planning began since its adoption. Families were actively involved in consultations, public discussion, planning and budgeting that were supposed to be an executive function (Cayon, 2005). Open communication promoted transparency while information sharing made richer interactions. Having a platform for shared information access and awareness within a community is a valuable means to support coordination, negotiation and a sense of belonging (Sawhney, 2000).

Social behavior defined people’s support systems influencing participation. Sharing of responsibility became a habit, which is observed by voluntarily giving counterpart. It overshadowed the “give-me syndrome” (Podemski, 1995:184). Too much dependency to the municipality in the past has changed when 38 POs are formed as support groups. The LGU as well prioritized (not only) infrastructure projects but also livelihood, health, education, and good governance (Work and Financial Plan 2005-2006). The latter inspired sectoral consultations, making BDPs, EBDC budget planning, and regular *Padayganay/Taho sa Barangay* or *barangay* report. Participation is inextricably linked to good urban governance (Kennedy, 2006).

The above was traced back to NC’s history of community support systems. The theory of social capital as Field puts it, relationship matter (Field 2003:1). This part unveils the ‘strong ties’ (Lin 2001: Ch 5) or ‘bonding social capital’ (Putnam 2000:22-4) that had been long established in New Corella. Five pioneer residents interviewed described four indigenous/informal community support schemes they had for decades namely, *Dayong*, *Paluwagan*, *Kabaway*, and *Lusong*. *Dayong* (carry together) is a scheme to

accumulate money from members' fixed contributions to support funeral expenses. "*Paluwagan*" (give and take) pooled some fixed amount from all members who take turn getting equal sum to use for any purposes. In "*Kabaway*" (carabao), the members give fixed sum in 12 months then later buy and butcher a carabao on fiestas (a Spanish influence feast in honor of a patron saint). "*Lusong*" (collective labor) is non-monetary where farmers take turn working by cluster in their farms. *Paluwagan* was obsolete when the LGU introduced a zero interest loan scheme with flexible term. Informal community support mechanisms inspired collective action in times of grief, celebration, and short-term economic relief. By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty (Field 2003:1). Individuals' values are in turned shaped by the experiences and values of others that their social capital exposes them to (Halpern, 2005:276).

These connections pointed some Filipino traits like kin ties which were formed as base for most friendships and supranuclear family relationships. Filipinos continued to feel a strong obligation to help their neighbors, whether in granting a small loan or providing jobs for neighborhood children, or expecting to be included in neighborhood work projects, such as rebuilding or re-roofing a house and clearing new land (Library of Congress Country Studies, 2003). Interviews showed that those who formerly belonged to a successful group tended to participate but those who experienced failure were indifferent. Community support systems, values and norms influenced people's reaction that fits Giddens' theory of structuration. Structure is always both enabling and constraining, in virtue of the inherent relation between structure and agency (and agency and power) (Giddens 1984:169).

The introduction of four transparency mechanisms namely 1) expansion of municipal and *barangay* development councils (EM/BDC), 2) conduct of annual people's congress, 3) *Taho sa Barangay* (Barangay Report), and 4) display of financial facts were essential. The expansion of the M/BDCs serves as venues for participation. The BC of Mambing said that he has 30 EBDC members exceeding 16 as required by law. Every *barangay* innovated various styles to post financial information, BDP and AIP. These data are posted all around the *barangay* hall pioneered by *barangay* Del Pilar. The People's Congress is a new innovation of NC to stimulate talks among stakeholders. It is held yearly beginning September 2004 at the municipal level, participated by BHWs, other volunteers, students, and sectoral representatives (women, farmers, youth, senior citizen, IPs, business people), residents, NGO staff, elected officials, heads of municipal agencies, BCs and councilor. Open dialogue (with tension) among political leaders and local line agencies transpired in which low performers or those with corruption controversies disliked. Budget appropriation, spending, business trips, development priorities and personal questions were sensitive causing either embarrassment or defensiveness. The same happened in Batad, Iloilo, Visayas, the Philippines where people raised the issues on illegal drugs and non-delegation of project management. The extent of people's awareness reached this stage and the People's Congress was a timely venue for mutual feedback. It was meant to set a tone for open communication and airing of issues, and strategically chosen issues that members can get behind in a true demonstration of collective force (Dodge, 2003). *Taho sa Barangay*, an innovation of I-CODE NGO in Batad, Iloilo adopted by

NC, is held monthly lead by the BC and council members wherein the *barangay* fiscal plan, budget, problems, and accomplishments are discussed after which consensus is arrived. A BC said that his people came to know the budget and spending. They became helpful instead of complaining or blaming him.

Boix and Posner's model as quoted by Halpern (2005:188) pointed that one of the key channels through which social capital is seen as leading to more effective government is by making citizens more sophisticated consumers of politics and offering channels through which their demands can be articulated.

Hindering Factors

Political dynamics, bureaucracy, leadership style, values and economic priorities came out to be the hindering factors. The interactions among elected *barangay* leaders (Carcor), semi-autocratic leadership honed by some set of values (San Jose), and being too economic-focused (Macgum) curtailed participation. Complacency of leaders and the lack of appreciation of time are both negative values. When the people attend consultations (or assembly) they hesitate to participate because of their tradition to leave everything to the politician (Cayon, 2005). These factors influenced or reinforced each other.

Conclusions

The complex role of people in striving for transparency is far-reaching as shown in this case. Partly rooted from a personal desire of the mayor that became a collective aspiration (against all odds) for a transparent LGU of New Corella. The values of human capital and their organizations or networks as social capital highly affected the transformation process. The ability of the people to bargain which was developed over time by NGOs attracted the authorities to pay attention. This was a chain reaction stirred by the LGC of 1991, a legal instrument capitalized by the people to pressure the LGU.

Unconsciously, the traditional support systems prepared the people to later emerge as critical role players in this initiative. The polar reactions of the LGU in New Corella and inter-dynamics between municipality to *barangay* and among *barangays* mimic the reality of most LGUs in the Philippines. However, New Corella approached it with strong political will to mobilize allies and sustain dialogues in venues like the People's Congress, *Taho sa Barangay*, and *purok* consultations.

Furthermore, participatory process was leveraged by SIAD strategy which was introduced by NGOs. The case of New Corella posits that a highly-trained human capital and a strongly bonded social capital complement in achieving a certain level of transparency in governance, and that political environment catapults both positive and unpleasant impacts to various players. NGO role in honing people's knowledge, skills, and behavior is yet indispensable.

Topmost of this finding is the recognition of community people as effective promoters of transparency. They were those who have strong social bonds, connected by group affiliations, experience successful collective efforts like in Mambing and del Pilar, and those who aspired for change after a long decade of ineffective services. On the other hand, the people who tended to be reliant to their leaders like in Macgum and Carcor showed very less concern about their critical role. The case of New Corella

inspires like-minded LGUs and the people to try this initiative, with caution on local realities, since it is not meant as a perfect generic cure.

Acknowledgment

The Local Government Unit, Local Community Organizers, Volunteers, Local People and all in New Corella; the Institute of Primary Health Care-Davao Medical School Foundation; Dr. Severo T. Bastian Jr., the Research Assistants in Davao City, Philippines; the Asian Health Institute, Japan; the referees, Prof. of Linguistics M. Reza Naghsh, Prof. Mitsuhiro HOSAKA, Dean of the Graduate School of International and Social Development, Nihon Fukushi University, Nagoya City, Japan; and the Center of Excellence Program, Nihon Fukushi University.

Literature Cited

- Altshuler, Alan A. 1954. *The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1-405.
- Bastian, Joycelyn A. 2004. *Shifting Top-Down to Participatory Planning: Bane or Boon, An Analysis of an Initiative of NC Municipality, the Philippines*, Nihon Fukushi University, *The Journal of Economic Studies*, 29: 75-101.
- Bastian, Joycelyn A. 1994. *Breaking the Culture of Silence With Popular Theatre, Techniques for Participatory Action; Development from Within: Essays on Organizing Communities for Self-Sufficiency*, Mindanao Training and Resource Center, Philippines, 83-89.
- Bautista, Victoria A. 1999. *Combating Poverty through the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services*, NCPAG, UP Diliman, Quezon City, 1-276.
- Cayon, Manuel. 2005. *Licking Corruption and Poverty at the Roots*, Synapse, IPHC-DMSF, Inc. Vol. 1 No. (1): 10-16.
- Chambers, Robert. 1997. *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London, 9-23, 161.
- De los Reyes, Romana P. 1989. *Development of Process Documentation Research, A Decade of PDR Reflections and Synthesis*, Institute of Philippine Culture-Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, Philippines, 21.
- De Poy, Elizabeth and Gitlin, Laura N. 1994. *Introduction to Research*, St. Louis, Baltimore, Mosby-Year Book Inc.
- Dodge, Jennifer; Ospina, Sonia and Sparrow, Roy. 2003. *Making Partnership a Habit: Margie McHugh and the New York Immigration Coalition*, Research Center for Leadership in Action, New York University.
- Giddens, Anthony 1984. *The Constitution of Society, Polity*, Cambridge, 169.
- Gill, Gerard J. 1993. *OK, The Data's Lousy, But It's All We've Got (Being a Critique of Conventional Methods)*, Gatekeeper Series 38, IIED, London.
- Halfani, Mohamed. 1994. *Towards an Understanding of Governance: The Emergence of an Idea and Its*

- Implication for Urban Research in Developing Countries, *Urban Research in the Developing World*. Halpern, David 2005. Social Capital, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 188.
- Kaban Galing*. 2001. The Philippine Case Bank on Innovation and Exemplary Practices in Local Governance, No. 5 Promoting excellence in urban governance, Local Government Academy, Philippines.
- Kennedy, Stewart. 2006. Designing good urban governance indicators: The importance of citizen participation in Greater Vancouver, Vol. 23, No. 3, 196-204.
- Korten, David C. 1989. Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation, A Decade of PDR Evolution, IPC-AdMU, Quezon City, Philippines, 17, 19.
- Library of Congress Country Studies. 2003 & 2005. <http://lcweb.loc.gov>, downloaded Nov. 6, 2003.
- Local Government Academy, Department of Interior and Local Government. 1995. A Primer on The Philippine Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) Approach to Improved Quality of Life, Philippines.
- Local Government Code 1991, R.A. 7160, A.V.B. Printing Press, Chapter 6, Sec 397-398.
- LGU of New Corella. A Compilation of Annual Accomplishment Reports 2000 to 2005, Davao Province, Mindanao, Philippines.
- Oakley, P. 1995. People's Participation in Development Projects, Occasional Paper Series No. 7, July 1995, Oxford, INTRAC.
- Oakley, P. et.al. 1991. Projects with People: The Practice of Participation in Rural Development, Geneva: ILO.
- Ospiña, Sonia and Schall, Ellen. 2000. Perspective on Leadership: Our Approach to Research and Documentation for the Leadership for a Changing World Program, The Ford Foundation, Washington D.C.
- Poblador, Niceto S. 1996. The Economics of the Firm: Managerial Applications, University of the Philippines Press, 16.
- Podemski, K. 1995. Socio-cultural Obstacles to Participation in Poland, 184.
- Sawhney, Nitin; Wheeler, Sean and Schmandt. 2000. Aware Community Portals: Shared Information Appliances for Transitional Spaces, Speech Interface Group, MIT Media Lab, Cambridge, MA.
- Sokoloff, Kenneth L. 2006. Political Inequality in Latin America: A historical perspective, Putting Knowledge to Work for Development, World Bank Institute, 1-6, <http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/article.asp?id=351>, downloaded May 2006.
- Viitanen, Anita-Kelles 1994. Participation: A Key for Stability and Sustainable Change, Asian Development Bank; downloaded April 11, 2005.
- Wanyande, Peter 2004. Decentralization and Local Governance, Regional Development Dialogue, Vol. 25, No. 1, Spring 2004, 10-11.